



The Home Department

Conducted by
Helen Watts McKee

"The Second Place"

Unto my loved ones have I given all;
The tireless service of my willing hands—

The strength of swift feet running to their call—

Each pulse of this fond heart whose love commands

The busy brain unto their use; each grace,

Each gift, the flower and fruit of life:

To me, they give with gracious hearts and tenderly,

The second place.

Such joy as my glad service may dispense,

They spend to make some brighter life more blest;

The grief that comes despite my frail defense,

They seek to soothe upon some dearer breast.

Love veils his deepest glory from my face;

I dimly dream how fair the light may be

Beyond the shade where I hold, longingly,

The second place.

And yet 'tis sweet to know that, though I make

No soul's supremest bliss, no life shall lie

Ruined and desolate, for my sake, Nor any heart be broken when I die.

And sweet it is to see my little space

Grow wider hour by hour, and gratefully

I thank the tender fate that granteth me

The second place.

—Susan M. Spaulding.

Helping to Solve Your Problems

We are beginning a New Year, and many new readers, as well as the older ones, will be with us through the next twelve-month. As in the past, we are very zealous to serve you, and to make of our department one of the best, if not the best, to be found. In order to do this, we must keep in close touch with you, and have a fair idea of what interests you. Then, too, your kindly words of encouragement are an inspiration to us, because even an "editor woman" has her blue days and bad hours, and sometimes feels like she has missed her vocation, and while she may not be overly greedy for praise, she is "livened up" by knowing she has made some other person's path a little easier. One of the greatest helps and inspirations an editor can have is the coming of letters from readers, asking for the solution of some problem or problems that are worrying them. We want these—the more the better; and we do not want you to feel that these answers are a burden to the department. No matter if some of the queries seem very unimportant to others—so they are important to you, is all we ask. They all show us the general trend of your thinking, and give us an idea of what the masses want.

We don't pretend that we know a great deal—perhaps not as much as some of you know; but we have facilities for gathering bits of information which you may not have, or, having, do not trouble to use. For many things, we have reference books at hand, and usually these are

correct; but often we are not sure but there are better answers—at least more up-to-date, so we pass the question on to be answered by some one whose word is authoritative. Often we have to search for the information, and those who are supposed to know, refer us to some one better posted, and it all takes time. Our "wise" friends are usually busy people, and sometimes can not attend to our business at once. Or, we may have to make personal visits to these wise people, and may not find them at leisure, and have to await their convenience. Often, we have to send a letter to some other city for the information which only the manufacturers can give us. This is why even the personal reply to the "stamped, addressed envelope" people is sometimes slow in coming. We want to get thoroughly reliable information, and the best possible, before passing it back to you. But anyway, we want to get the information you ask for, and in helping you, others are also helped. For this reason, even a personal answer may not always be sent "by return mail," as many ask for it. But we are more than glad to have your letters. Whether you want to know things, or know something you want to pass on to us, we are glad to hear from you.

Words to the "Bye-Lo-Land" song are sent by Mrs. Chas. J. Maher, Portland, Ore., and "Mina Persall," Ohio, to each of whom we send thanks. Their kind words are appreciated.

Mrs. C. P., Illinois, writes that she thinks "a woman's place is at home, and that she will find enough to do if she stays there." Well, yes; if the woman happens to have a home—which some of us don't; while others would not have, if they did not work pretty hard to get and keep it. Mrs. P. tells us she does not care to associate "with that class" (meaning suffragists, I suppose). Too bad; she might find them worth while. Mrs. Perkins-Gilman says "politics (as it touches the pure milk question) is not outside the home—it is inside the baby." The "staying-at-home" question is a many-sided one.

For Cold Feet

Many aged people and young children more than people of other ages, are troubled with cold feet. A sand bag is an excellent "comfort" for this trouble. Get some clean sand, and dry, by heating it in an iron kettle over the fire, stirring until it heats through. Make a bag about eight inches square, of thick cotton cloth, fill with the dry sand and sew up the opening very closely; cover this bag with thick flannel cloth; this will prevent the sand from sifting out. When wanted, heat by laying on top of the warming oven, or other surface where it will not burn, and when hot through, use it for warming the feet. The sand will hold heat a long time, is always ready, and can be emptied and the sack washed at any time. Or the flannel can be removed while it is heating, and replaced at once.

The Druids' New Year

In the oldentime, the Druids on New Year's Day performed the ceremony of cutting the mistletoe. Preparations were made for a banquet and a sacrifice under the oak where the mistletoe grew, and two

white bulls were tied by the horns. Then a druid, clothed in white, mounted the tree, cut the mistletoe, and received it in a white cloak thrown over his hand. The sacrifices were then made, and prayers were offered to God to send blessings on his own gift. Many of the old English superstitions have come down to us, as, for instance, the saying that the first person to enter a house on New Year's Day morning must be a man. Also, that, when sweeping the dirt out of doors New Year's morning, all one's luck for the year goes out with it. It is said that even in America the cows kneel at the stroke of twelve on New Year's Eve. But as the cows themselves are dumb on this point, and nobody may positively say they do not, one has full liberty to believe it, if desirable.

Wage Earning When Past Fifty

A reader asks if there is something at which a woman past fifty, who has had no training at any kind of wage-earning, can start in and make a living and \$150 clear per year. It depends very much on the woman, but even at the best, in these times, only a few comparatively who work for wages make more than they necessarily spend. Among wage earners there are several classes: One is the debtor class, who is always working to pay for yesterday's dinner, and never catching up; the fault for this does not always lie with the worker, but circumstances are often to blame. Others work to pay for today's dinner, and this is what is called living from hand to mouth, and the majority of workers belong to this class. Any little circumstance that deprives such an one of even a day's wage will leave him among the debtor class, with scant hope of ever regaining the lost footing, unless aided. The one who works to pay for tomorrow's dinner is the one who has laid by in store, whether much or little, and has learned to spend less than he earns, no matter at what cost to himself. In order to earn even a living, after fifty years old, with untrained hands, there must be determination of character, prudence, frugality and industry, at least. Yet many women do this very thing. It is remarkable, the way a woman can get along, make a living for herself and a dependent family, when left alone, dependent on her own abilities, and not only raise her family, but educate them, and keep a good home over their heads, through her industry and determination to carry the project through. Children of both sexes should be brought up to work, learning to do some one thing well, and acquiring habits of industry and thrift; even when thrown out on the world at middle age, there is usually something by which a living, if nothing more, can be made. The social world is in a ferment, just now, and the tossing of the waves is bewildering; but no one should be discouraged. Find if possible what you can do best, and where your market may be, then, "do determinedly."

For the Toilet

Where one has to use soft coal, and especially where one has to "stoke her own fire," dirty, or at least, grimy hands are the rule. Soap and water only seem to make matters worse, as the cuticle roughens, and the hand all over is covered with black seams. A much better way is to have a jar of cold cream,

or any clean, unsalted grease will do, and before washing the hands at night, and if necessary, several times a day, rub the grease well over the hands, let remain a few minutes, then wash in water warm enough to take off the grease—with the aid of a good, vegetable-oil soap, and then, when clean, rinse with cold water, rub in a few drops of the toilet mixture so often told about—glycerine, rosewater and lemon juice, and then dry; or, in most cases, dry before applying the mixture, applying but a very little.

Another way, where the hands are very much seamed with the fine lines which the ordinary washing with soap will not take off, have one of the little stiff brushes used in the kitchen, which costs several cents each; grease the hands as above, then, with a very little soap suds, hot enough to take off the grease, go over the hands with the little brush, scouring all the lines away, then dip the hands in common cider vinegar, let dry, and the hands will be much smoother and clean. Some people, after letting the grease soften the dirt, rub it off before washing; others wash the skin well, then fill with the grease and remove the grease with a bit of gauze, or cotton, or old, soft rags, which can be burned after using. Any of these methods will cleanse the skin, smooth it, and prepare it for resisting the dirt.

A pair of cloth gloves, costing not more than ten cents, and often to be had for five cents, should be kept with the coal supply, or close to the stove, and put on every time anything is handled. These gloves should be regularly washed and kept clean.

Sheep Skin Rugs

To clean these, make a strong lather by boiling soap in a little water; mix this with a sufficient quantity of water a little more than lukewarm to wash the rug in, and rub the boiled soap on parts which require additional cleaning. When the skin has been well washed in this water, prepare another suds in the same way, of the same warmth, and put the skin through this, followed by a third, which should be enough to clean it thoroughly. Rinse it well in lukewarm water until all the soap has been removed, then put it in water in which a little wash bluing has been dropped, sufficient to make the wool a good white. After this it should be squeezed well, shaken out and hung in the open air with the skin side toward the sun, but not while it is too hot, else the skin will become hardened. Shake and rub it while drying, to prevent the stiff, crackly condition. It should be frequently turned, and hung up first by one end, then the other, until thoroughly dried. Be sure to rub it frequently between the hands as it is drying. These rugs, with or without lining, are excellent foot warmers for old people, or those sitting still a great deal. The wool may be dyed if desired.

Cleaning Garments

To remove stains from broad-cloth, this is recommended: Take an ounce of pipe-clay that has been ground fine; mix it with twelve drops of alcohol, and the same quantity of spirits of turpentine; when ever you wish to remove any stain from cloth, moisten a little of this mixture with alcohol and rub on the spot. Let remain until dry, then rub on the spot. Let remain until dry, then rub it off with a woolen cloth, and the spot will disappear.

Grease Spots, to remove: Dissolve an ounce of pure pearlsh in a pint of spring water, and to the solution add a lemon cut in small slices. Mix the ingredients well, keep the mixture warm for a few